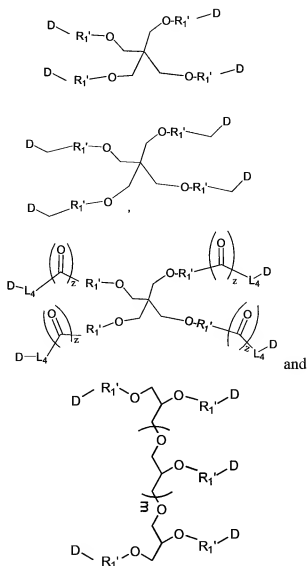


Amendments to the Specification

Please replace paragraph [0026] beginning at page 13, line 19, with the following paragraph:

[0026] For illustrative purposes, in the case of multiple arm polyethylene glycol (PEG) residues, examples of possible conjugates are selected from among:



wherein

m is 0 - 4;

z is 0 or 1;

L_4 is the same as that which defines L_{1-3} ;

D is a moiety of the formula V_a or V_b ;

$R_1' =$

$-(CH_2CH_2O)_x^-$;

$-(CH_2CH_2O)_x-CH_2C(O)-$;

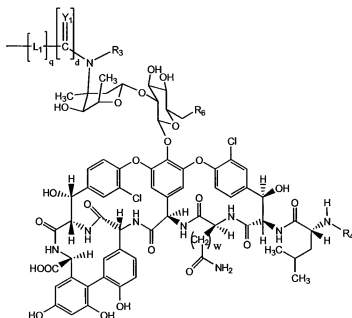
$-(CH_2CH_2O)_x-CH_2CH_2NR_7^-$, and

$-(CH_2CH_2O)_x-CH_2CH_2SH-$;

wherein x is a positive integer;

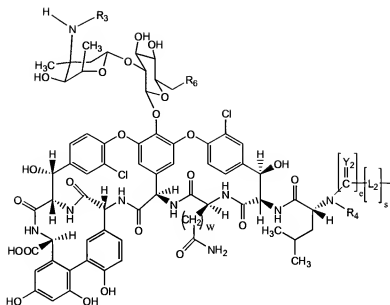
R_{3-4} [R_{13-24}] are independently selected from among hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyls, C_{3-12} branched alkyls, C_{3-8} cycloalkyls, C_{1-6} substituted alkyls, C_{3-8} substituted cycloalkyls, aryls, substituted aryls, aralkyls, C_{1-6} alkenyls, C_{3-12} branched alkenyls, C_{1-6} alkynyls, C_{3-12} branched alkynyls, C_{1-6} heteroalkyls, substituted C_{1-6} hetero-alkyls, C_{1-6} alkoxyalkyl, phenoxyalkyl and C_{1-6} heteroalkoxys;

V_a is



and

V_b is



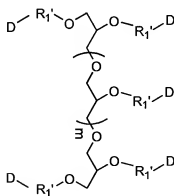
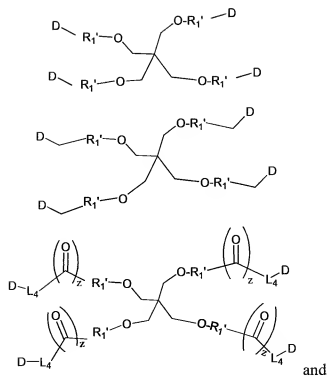
wherein, d, e, q, and s are each independently 0 or 1, and all other variables are as described above.

Please replace paragraph [0027] beginning at page 16, line 3, with the following paragraph:

[0027] Preferably, R_{3-4} $[[R_{13-24}]]$ are independently selected from among hydrogen and C₁₋₆ alkyls; n is 1-400, more preferably 50-250, and m is 0-20, more preferably 0-4.

Please replace paragraph [0030] beginning at page 16, line 19, with the following paragraph:

[0030] In a more preferred embodiment, in the case of multiple arm polyethylene glycol (PEG) residues, possible conjugates are selected from among:



wherein

$\underline{R_{3-4}}$ $[[R_{13-24}]]$ are independently selected from among hydrogen, and C_{1-6} alkyls;

z is 0 or 1;

n is 50-250;

m is 0-4; and

D is V_a or V_b as described above.